



Manistee County Board of Commissioners

Manistee County Courthouse • 415 Third Street • Manistee, Michigan 49660

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DRAFT

MANISTEE COUNTY TECHNOLOGY/INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Thursday, April 23, 2009
2:00 P.M.

Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room
Manistee County Courthouse

Members Present: Glenn Lottie, Chairperson/County Commissioner; Russell Pomeroy, County Treasurer (left early); Marilyn Kliber, County Clerk; Gordon McLellan, Network Administrator; Heather Vasquez, Equalization Department; Penny Pepera, Register of Deeds; Sue Wagner, County Planner; Rachel Wittlieff, District Court Probation; Kathi Lynn, 85th District Court; and Jeri Lyn Prielipp, Finance Assistant/Recording Secretary

Members Absent: Allan O'Shea, County Commissioner; Ford Stone, Prosecuting Attorney; Kris Randall, 19th Circuit Court Administrator; Captain Robert Lancaster; Bruce Schimke, Maintenance Supervisor; Deidre Robison, Probate Court Register; and David Thompson, Friend of the Court

Mr. Lottie called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.

ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

Mr. McLellan distributed a Video Archiving Analysis dated April 2009 (APPENDIX A). He suggested that video taping the Regional Summit on May 14, 2009, might be a good first event to usher in new technology for Manistee County's web site. This would entail purchasing a camcorder, tripod, and the other equipment listed under the "Minimal Equipment List" on page 3 of APPENDIX A. The total cost for the minimal equipment is \$833. It will cost approximately \$5,256 to get the County Boardroom wired for sound. Mr. Pomeroy cautioned that the equipment line item in the Technology Fund is over budget, although there is a fund balance in that fund that would require a budget amendment. Ms. Kliber voiced her opinion and stated she feels the taxpayers dollars would be put to better use by offering meetings on television, rather than on a video feed on the County web site. She doesn't know of anybody (especially the younger generation) who would sit in front of a computer to watch a meeting. Also not everyone has high speed internet. Following discussion,

Mr. Lottie recommended purchasing the minimal equipment listed on the Video Archiving Analysis (APPENDIX A) for a total cost of \$833.00, and authorize the County Controller/Administrator to make a budget amendment from fund balance for this expense. No alternative recommendation was proposed.

Mr. McLellan offered to video tape the Regional Summit and he is also willing to record other Committee meetings, perhaps the Energy Fair, and various other County events, at his regular contracted hourly rate.

ITEMS NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

Ms. Wittlieff explained that District Court Probation recently purchased a new laptop and extended warranty from CDW-G for a total of \$1,133.94 and she requested that the Committee consider paying for this equipment from the Technology Fund. She explained that this laptop allows her to access the court software on her office computer from home after hours when she and/or Officer Parrinello are asked to report the probationary status of individuals that the police have apprehended or have in custody. The Committee felt that these invoices should be paid from District Court Probation's individual budget out of their equipment line item.

Ms. Lynn announced that District Court staff will visit Grand Traverse County for a demonstration of their digital recording system.

At the request of Mr. Lottie, Ms. Pepera updated the Committee on the progress being made in the Register of Deeds Office with digitizing their documents. Mr. Lottie reiterated that he is anxious for the Register of Deeds to begin making documents available to the public on line.

The Committee rescheduled the May meeting to Friday, May 15, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the 85th District Court Jury Room located on the 2nd floor of the Courthouse. The May 14th date conflicted with the Regional Summit.

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 P.M.

Glenn Lottie, County Commissioner

Jeri Lyn Prielipp, Finance Assistant

Gordon McLellan, Network Administrator

Sue Wagner, County Planner

Kathi Lynn, 85th District Court

Rachel Wittlieff, District Court Probation

Marilyn Kliber, County Clerk

Heather Vasquez, Equalization Department

Russell Pomeroy, County Treasurer

Penny Pepera, Register of Deeds

Video Archiving Analysis

April 2009

Prepared by Gordon McLellan

(Appendix
A-1)

Request:

In an effort to promote a more open and transparent government, the topic of "video archiving" has been brought up from time to time in various meetings. Publishing videos on our website will allow residents of Manistee County access to meetings and government functions they might not otherwise be able to attend. Viewing these videos will not only provide information but will encourage the public to participate in their government and community. Providing a video archive on our website is also a great asset for attracting new residents and businesses to the area.

Analysis:

Firstly, let us begin with a few definitions:

Video Archive: Electronic video recordings of events and meetings which are made available for later viewing.

Streaming Video: An Internet video can be viewed one of two ways. It can be downloaded to a personal computer, and played back with or without an Internet connection, in short, called a "video download". The alternate method is to send small parts of the video over the Internet to the viewers' computer, at a rate just fast enough that the video is able to play in real time; this is "video streaming." Streaming a video requires both the sender and receiver to have sufficiently fast internet connections to support this activity. The benefit to streaming is such that the video will start playing right away, as opposed to a lengthy download which must complete before the video will play.

Live Streaming: The video feed is uploaded directly from the camera to the Internet as it is recorded, with little or no delay from real-time. Live streaming is a major technical hurdle, and requires a rigid attention to detail and the meeting agenda to prevent "off topic" conversation from being broadcast "live" over the Internet.

Podcast: A highly compressed video or audio broadcast, made popular by Apple Computer and their ipod music players. Podcasts are designed to be quickly downloaded and easily played on small devices, such as music players, cell phones, etc.

Youtube: Youtube provides advertising supported video streaming for Internet users. Youtube has a massive user base, ranging from home video type content to serious

graduate level lectures. Universities such as Stanford and MIT are now offering full-length lectures on a wide range of subjects through the Youtube website.

Introduction:

At the February technology committee meeting, Grand Traverse County demonstrated their video system and gave some detail regarding the vendor they had chosen to provide the services. Grand Traverse has a state of the art meeting venue which they share with the city. It is equipped with robotic cameras, flat-panel displays and camera room which controls the production and streaming of the video content. The vendor chosen by the County provides more or less a "turn key" solution to video archiving. The County simply uploads raw video and meeting materials to the company, which turns them into a finished product on a private website.

A second demonstration was performed by PowerStream. PowerStream gave us a rather lengthy demonstration of their product, which acts as a "repeater" or "mirror" of video content. They do not directly offer any value-added services. It is my professional opinion that neither Grand Traverse County's vendor nor PowerStream offer a product that we could take advantage of at this point. However, that is not to say we couldn't start offering video archives of our meetings right away.

With very little investment, we could be video taping meetings and starting a video archive on our website. Streaming of the videos would be provided by using a free service such as Youtube. Live streaming of meetings would require significantly more resources, and in my opinion is not feasible at this time. However, little is lost in not offering live streaming. The key to a popular and successful video archive project relies more on content and production quality than money spent on services. A quality video production requires a human touch, not a computer program controlling a robotic camera, which tries to follow voices around a room; a general rule of shooting video is the less camera movement the better

Solution:

Given the layout of the commissioners' room, a minimum of two cameras is required to do the job in the best possible manner. A stationary camera with a wide angle lens would be positioned in the back of the room, perhaps on a shelf or otherwise secured so as not easily jostled by the audience if they are present. This camera would capture the group seated around the tables and would provide most of the video content. A second camera would be movable on a tripod, and have an operator. This camera would be used to record questions from the audience, a presenter speaking at the lectern or for close-ups on individual commissioners presenting reports.

To get the project started, I would be the camera operator. Eventually we would want to involve members of the community in this project or another person from within the Courthouse. Additionally, West Shore College has several television / media production related courses and area schools may offer some sort of AV club. I

would also handle editing of the video and uploading to the Internet, and would work to train other staff members on editing and uploading the video, either as a permanent solution, or for times when I am unavailable.

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Equipment:

The minimum equipment to get started is a single camera, tripod and accessories. Additionally, a few upgrade parts are required for the computer which will be editing the video. Pricing from online vendors puts this cost under \$1000, from my research, this equipment is not available locally. This minimum configuration will give us the tools to see how taping the meetings will work, and highlight areas to focus on for improvement to provide the next level of video archiving.

The ideal configuration would consist of two cameras, individual microphones and an auto-mixer. The microphones feed into a device called an auto-mixer, which listens to each microphone, and adjusts the volume compensating for people who talk loudly or softly. The microphone mix would be recorded separately and the mobile camera would use a camera mounted directional microphone. In post-production editing software will let the operator pick and chose the best audio and video composition, as well as apply filters, for example, to help cut down the rumble of the heater on the roof. The auto-mixer is a very expensive device; however, it will provide vastly superior audio quality, compared with a manual mixer. Pricing for this solution is roughly \$5000.

Minimal equipment list (equipment needed to start the project):

- JVC GZ-HD6 High Definition Camcorder - \$570
- Velbon DF-60 3 way panhead tripod - \$55
- Azden SMX-10 Directional Stereo Camera Microphone - \$69
- Extra Camera Battery, JVC BN-VF832 - \$65
- Sennheiser HD202 monitor headphones - \$24
- Camera Bag - \$20
- Shipping and handling - Approximately \$30
- Total Amount - \$833

Ideal equipment list, Board Room wired for sound:

- 2x JVC Camcorders - \$1140
- Tripod, 2x camera mic, 2x batteries, headphones, 2x camera bags - \$389
- Shure SCM-810 Automixer and XLR microphone accessory - \$1,397
- Nine gooseneck XLR microphones - \$1,350
- Nine 100ft XLR cables - \$180
- Portable Wireless Microphone (for Lectern, etc) - \$600
- Incidental items to complete installation, shipping and handling - \$200
- Total Amount - \$5256